DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 245 018 UD 023 600

AUTHOR Tran, Xuan Canh
TITLE The Factors Hindering Indochinese Parent Participation in School Activities.
INSTITUTION San Diego State Univ., Calif. Inst. for Cultural Pluralism.
PUB DATE 19 Aug 82
NOTE 25p.; A publication of the Bilingual Education Service Center.
PUB TYPE Reports - General (140)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adjustment (to Environment); *Asian Americans; *Cultural Differences; Economic Status; Elementary Secondary Education; *Indochinese; *Influences; Language Proficiency; *Parent Participation; *Parent School Relationship; Social Characteristics

ABSTRACT

Indochinese parents and the Indochinese community tend to avoid participation in school activities and in the process of making decisions for their children's education. Interviews of English-speaking Indochinese community leaders and parents in San Diego, California, found the following factors contributing to this situation: (1) the democratic process of sharing in decision-making is contrary to the parents' cultural expectations; they believe that the schools have the expertise and the right to make decisions and it is not necessary for parents to share the responsibility; (2) the parents, coming from poor countries with poor facilities do not see that American schools are not equally staffed and equipped and that children are not treated equally; (3) the parents do not understand that their children have problems caused by language barriers and cultural differences; (4) most parents do not understand their legal rights with regard to their children's education; (5) parents do not understand the American educational system and simply do not realize "what is really going on" with their children's education; (6) parents do not have the experience to take an active role in the parent advisory councils; and (7) parents lack time and means of transportation. Besides the interview findings, the paper includes a literature review on community/parent involvement (mostly about the Hispanic experience) and information on the social and educational characteristics of Indochinese groups in the San Diego area. (CMG)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

JUN 1984

ED245018

BILINGUAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER
INSTITUTE FOR CULTURAL PLURALISM
SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY
6363 ALVARADO CT., SUITE 200
SAN DIEGO, CA 92120

THE FACTORS HINDERING INDOCHINESE PARENT PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Xuan C Tran

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

- [x] This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- [ ] Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

UD023600

XUAN CANH TRAN
August 19, 1982

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature reveals that studies and research on Indochinese Parental involvement are not existing. However, some studies relating to Spanish speaking programs have good suggestions for our study on Indochinese parent and community participation. The study by Ogletree and Walker on Puerto Rican Parents and Bilingual Education has shown that Parental paticipation would enhance parents understanding and support for Bilingual Education and therefore facilitate their children's education. To be effective participants, parents should understand the philosophy, goals, and evaluation methods of Bilingual Education programs (Ogletree, 1980). The Survey of Parents' Opinion of Bilingual Education Programs in Chicago found that less than a majority of Latins parents are involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of Biligual program. Parents viewed the programs positively and felt comfortable in the school setting because they were able to communicate in their native language. The study concluded that the success of Biligual Education is dependent upon parental participation in the decision making process (Tirado, 1975). The study of Tirado found that 100 percent of parents having children placed in the Bilingual program believed that parents should have an active role in the Bilingual program, and 16 percent of parents not having children placed in the Bilingual program did not believe so. The data seem to indicate that parent participation and their attitudes toward Bilingual Education is determined by whether or not theyhave children in the Bilingual program. The studies on parent involvement suggested that parents having children in the Bilingual program feel more comfortable when having contact with school, become more involved, and are more interested in the school activities, have greater opportunity to meet principals and teachers, the school is more involved with the community, and their children are happier in schools (Tirado, 1975). To increase parental participation Tirado suggested

that the schools should:

1/ improve the dissemination of information on Bilingual education,

2/ establish a staff liaison person between the parents and school,

3/ establish a Bilingual Council independent of the general school Council,

4/ involve the community and local agencies in the development of Bilingual programs, and

5/ give parents and the community greater input into the decision making process.

Cordasco suggested that parent will support those programsthat they help plan, implement, and evaluate. He said that quality education can not be brought to any community until its members participate in the decision-making process(Cordasco, 1973). In spite of the efforts to implement the parent involvement mandates of title I of the Elementary and Secondary Act, questions have been raised about parents' interest in serving on the Parent Advisory Council (PAC). The lack of parents' interest is manifested in poor attendance at PAC meetings, poor participation in PAC activities, difficulty in finding enough people who want to serve on PAC. Other questions also have been raised about the lack of efforts from local school district in assuring the effectiveness of parental participation (Mizell, 1979). Mizell contends that unless federal, state and local officials charged with administering Title I really believe that the parental involvement mandates are important, and unless there are programs of outreach and enforcement to make that belief a reality, the label "lack of interest" can not be applied to parents alone given that "there are many officials who simply do not want to be bothered with an effective PAC. If the law did not require it, they would not have councils at all. They view PAC as an inconvenience and a nuisance"(Mizell,1979). Mizell also indicated that the interest of PAC members is influenced by the level of their previous

experience in Community organization and with public schools. Unless school officials make a consiencious effort to understand what parents need to be effective PAC members and respond to those needs, parents may perceive the school officials as not being interested in them. The interest of parents is more likely to wane when they are working with the school officials who do not know how to effectively involve the parents, or who does not understand parents' role. Working with parents requires a skill which too many local school officials have never been taught or familiar with. In addition, there are no materials specifically designed to meet the informational needs of parents. Under these circumstances, few school officials know how to involve parents and keep their interest. Mizell also indicated the factors which may "turn off" parents interest are:

1/ "Your role is only advisory",

2/ the lack of clarity about the parents' role and responsibilities,

3/ the lack of clear explanation and interpretation of materials such as regulations and guidelines for Parents who do not understand them,

4/ the lack of planning and rapid turn over in membership are detrimental to stimulating and maintaining parents' interest.

Mizell suggested some actions to be taken to maintain parent interest as such:

1/ job description of PAC members should be developed and circulated to all parents before election,

2/ PAC should be given visibility in school district newsletters, local news media,

3/ parents should be encouraged to initiate activities which will produce results they can see,

4/ working with parents should be seen as a continuing process of leadership development,

5/ emphasize the negative effects which should result from the absence or abuse of the program.

Mizell concluded that part of school officials' responsibilities are to encourage and maintain parent interest. Then, if parent involvement is negative, who is responsible for that? The school district or the parents themselves? With regards to Asian parent involvement in the United States, Topacio stated that Asian parents involvement is limited due to the lack of experience, skill, and communicative abilities. Cultural conflicts also deter the development of well organized advisory councils. Parental involvement is a concept founded in the American tradition of citizen participation which is strange to Asian peoples. If this is the case, the school officials have more responsibilities and committment to acquaint the parents with the new concepts and philosophy of the American systems of education, not merely fulfill legislative requirements. "A truly viable community and parent advisory Committee is one that shares correspondingly with the program's decision process. Most Asian community and parents advisory committees are a long way from achieving such a level of development. An intensive effort to develop and train advisory council participants, provide information and technical assistance toward groups development and collective self-worth, and provide assistance in acquiring problem-solving skills will enhance the purpose of Bilingual education" (Torpacio:1979). The review of the federal and state legislation reveals that parental involvement is required either as a condition for the establishment of the program in the federal law and in some states.

"There are numerous laws that stipulate parent and community in Bilingual programs. However, these are written in legal jargon and hidden between volumes of other laws, thus being practically inaccessible to parents and community members."(Valasco:1978:2). Such laws are written with the purpose of improving the quality of education that

children receive through these programs, and participation of parents is a legal requirement because without their participation the programs can not possibly have disired effects. Unless these laws are understood by parents and the Community, they can not be successfully implemented and the programs can not be effective" (Velasco:1978:2). Velasco also elaborated the rational for parental participation based on the following assumptious:

1/ In a democracy public institution exist to serve the needs of all the persons in the society and should reflect the interest of those served,

2/ Parents are a valuable resource in the classroom who can assist school personnel in providing the best possible education for all the children in the school.

The section of Parents and community members' right under Title VII states that schools or districts must consult parents of limited English proficiency students in the development of the application. A community advisory committee is required which shall be composed of, and selected by, parents of limited English proficient children.(Subpart B.123.17). The legislation under the State of California Dept. of Education also requires the development of school improvement plans by school site councils. Additionally, it gives the school district governing board the right to decide whether or not the district will participate in the school improvement program. Section 52011 states that all school districts are required to provide information on the school improvement Program to all principals of school, parent, and other school personnel. The school site council votes on whether to have a program or not; the final decision is made by district governing board. Section 52012 further states that the school site council:

1/ must be formed at each participating school ,

2/ teachers select teacher and parents select parents for the council members

3/ high school students may be members,

4/ there must be parity between school personnel and community members. Section 52016 requires that in elementary school, the active involvement of parents in classroom activities and in other aspects of school improvement program should be included in the plan. Parent education regarding the growth and development of children must be provided.

THE PROBLEMS

Why do Indochinese parents and their community tend to avoid participation in school activities and in the process of making decisions for their children education? This question has been raised many times on many occasions by the teachers and school officials. Teachers also want to know if parents feel comfortable when the teachers visit them at their home. They want to know the reasons why parents do not want to contact school and how to communicate with them. Even those parents who had been invited and who had been informed that speakers will be selected from the community and will speak the parents' language, only 5% of them were present at the Conference for parents organized by the Bilingual Education Service Center in San Diego in June 1982. The Indochinese Parents Advisory Council for San Diego City Schools consists of over 20 members. However, except the first two meetings, only 4 or 5 community leaders attended the subsequent monthly meetings initiated by the director of the program.

The Indochinese and Filippino parents who have been involved in FILAMEDA Parent Training Program are reluctant to go through all 4 institutes before they complete the one year program of training even through they have been paid for their attendance and for lunch. The parents enrolled in the program have to sign a contract as a committment to complete the whole program, and almost all of them fulfill their

obligation. The evaluation about the institutes collected from the participants after each workshop reveals that the programs have been effective. However, no evaluation have been conducted to measure the change of the attitude of paticipants, their increasing interests in, and the degree of committment to education of their children after the completion of the program. The negative attitude of parents and the community toward involvement in school activities and in the process of making decision for their own children's education has become a real concern for the researcher.

The Assumptions

The negative attitude of parents may be due to:

1/ The lack of knowledge about the American educational system,

2/ the lack of knowledge about the democratic process of making decision,

3/ the belief that the school district has adequate expertise and right to make decisions, and it is not necessary for parents to share responsibility,

4/ the belief that the children do not have problems caused by language barrier and cultural differences,

5/ the inability to communicate with school teachers and officials,

6/ the inability to see the needs of their children,

7/ the alienation created by the strange atmosphere of the school and people of different cultures and languages ,

8/ the lack of interest, time, and means of transportation.

With the above assumptions in mind, the researcher attempts to review the social and educational patterns of the Indochinese refugees in San Diego and in the United States.

SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The Indochinese people actually include four main groups who have different cultures and languages. Those groups are Cambodian, Lao, Hmong and Vietnamese. Among the Vietnamese, there are Vietnamese and Chinese Vietnamese. The fact that most records tend to consider the Vietnamese Chinese as Vietnamese because:

1/ most Chinese Vietnamese speak Vietnamese,

2/ the Chinese names are phonetically Vietnamized,

3/ officially all Chinese Vietnamese were recorded on paper as Vietnamese when they were admitted to the United States, and

4/ the Chinese Vietnamese tend to associate themselves with the Vietnamese in their religious, social, and business relations rather than with the Chinese American because the Vietnamese and Chinese Vietnamese have shared common experiences.

It is because of the above reasons, the researcher will use the term Vietnamese for both Vietnamese and Chinese Vietnamese groups.

An assessment was conducted by the Social Science Research Laboratory at San Diego State University on the Characteristics and Needs of the Indochinese Refugees in San Diego County in 1981 (ACCESS Report, 1981). The assessment was based on the responses of all 800 respondents who were randomly selected among four major ethnic groups of 430 Vietnamese, 160 Laos, 100 Hmong and 110 Cambodians. Approximately 600,000 Indochinese refugees resettled in the U.S. between April 1975 and August 1982, and an estimated 200,000 or one third of them have resettled in California, and an estimated 22,000 have resettled in San Diego.

The educational background of the Indochinese is different from one group to another. The Hmong seems to have the highest rate of no formal education(41%) and no one has college education, while the Vietnamese have the highest rate of college education

(27.7%) A remark needs to be made here on the fact that the rate 27.7% is much higher than the actual rate of college educated people in Vietnam (see table 1).

Table : 1 HOME COUNTRY EDUCATION OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD BY ETHNICITY

	VIET	LAO	H'MONG	CAMB	OVERALL
No Formal	14.0%	13.8%	41.0%	11.8%	17.0%
Elementary or Less	12.3%	38.8%	40.0%	31.8%	23.8%
Some High School	33.5%	31.3%	18.0%	52.7%	33.8%
High School Graduate	12.1%	11.9%	1.0%	2.7%	9.4%
Beyond High School	27.7%	4.4%	0.0%	0.9%	15.9%
Don't Know/ No Answer	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
TOTAL	430	160	100	110	800

When asked how serious they perceive the English language as a problem , 65.8% Vietnamese responded as very serious, 82.5% for Lao, 95% Hmong, 73.6% Cambodian, and 74% for the whole group (see table 2)

Table : 2 HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD PERCEIVED ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROBLEM BY ETHNICITY

	VIET	LAO	HMONG	CAMB	OA
Very Serious	65.8%	82.5%	95.0%	73.6%	73.9%
Somewhat	16.5%	12.5%	4.0%	19.1%	14.5%
Not Very	17.2%	4.4%	1.0%	7.3%	11.3%
No Answer	0.5%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
TOTAL	430	160	100	110	800

The average family size of the Indochinese is larger than the family size of the general population. If the average American family size is 4, the Vietnamese family consist approximately 5 members, the Cambodian 6, the Lao 7, and the Hmong 8 (see table 3).

Table : 3 HOUSEHOLD SIZE BY ETHNICITY

	VIET	LAO	H'MONG	CAMB	OVERALL
1 Person	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	1.5%
2 - 4 Persons	37.4%	19.4%	5.0%	27.3%	28.4%
5 - 7 Persons	43.0%	43.8%	43.0%	48.2%	43.9%
More than 7 Persons	17.0%	36.9%	52.0%	23.6%	26.3%
TOTAL	430	160	100	110	800
Mean Household Size	5.28	6.81	8.07	5.84	6.02

The average annual income of the Indochinese is very low in comparison to the general population. It was reported by the National Advisory Council on Economic Opportunity in August 1982 that presently 14% of the average American families of 4 people have income below the poverty line, while the Vietnamese constitute 65%, the Lao 76%, the Hmong 80%, and Cambodian 82% . This comparison does not count the fact that a Hmong family has twice as many persons as the average American family (see table 4).

Table: 4 MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY ETHNICITY

	VIET	LAO	HMONG	CAMB	OVERALL
$0-$700	21.9%	20.0%	17.0%	29.1%	21.9%
$700-$1,000	29.5%	34.4%	34.0%	34.5%	31.8%
$1,000-$1,300	14.4%	21.9%	28.0%	18.2%	18.1%
$1,300-$1,600	11.4%	12.5%	15.0%	8.2%	11.6%
$1,600-$1,900	6.0%	8.8%	3.0%	7.3%	6.4%
$1,900 +	14.1%	1.9%	3.0%	2.7%	8.8%
Don't Know/ No Answer	2.6%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%
TOTAL	430	160	100	110	800

When asked how difficult is for them to understand the American way of life, 28% of the Vietnamese sample responded as very serious, as compared to 32% Lao, 91% Hmong, and 9% Cambodian. Except in the case of the Cambodian respondents which seems to be too high the other groups' responses seem to be within the expectancy range. (see table 5).

Table : 5 HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD DIFFICULTY IN UNDERSTANDING AMERICAN LIFE BY ETHNICITY

	VIET	LAO	HMONG	CAMB	OA
Very Serious	28.1%	31.9%	91.0%	9.1%	34.1%
Somewhat	30.0%	47.5%	7.0%	46.4%	32.9%
Not Very	40.2%	18.8%	1.0%	44.5%	31.6%
No Answer	1.6%	1.9%	1.0%	0.0%	1.4%
TOTAL	430	160	100	110	800

When asked how serious they perceived the American prejudice against refugees and community, 17% Vietnamese responded as very serious, 24% Lao, 82% Hmong, and only 2% Cambodian. This finding is consistent with the degree of perceived difficulty in understanding the American way of life (see table 6).

Table: 6 HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD DIFFICULTY WITH AMERICAN PREJUDICE BY ETHNICITY

	VIET	LAO	HMONG	CAMB	OA
Very Serious	17.2%	24.4%	82.0%	1.8%	24.6%
Somewhat	24.4%	42.5%	15.0%	16.4%	25.8%
Not Very	49.5%	25.0%	1.0%	79.1%	42.6%
No Answer	8.8%	8.1%	2.0%	2.7%	7.0%
TOTAL	430	160	100	110	800

With respect to how the Indochinese household perveived raising children in the United States, about 25% Vietnamese responded as very serious, 23% Lao, 60% Hmong, and only almost 1% Cambodian.

Table : 7 HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD PROBLEMS WITH RAISING CHILDREN IN AMERICAN CULTURE BY ETHNICITY

	VIET	LAO	HMONG	CAMB	OA
Very Serious	24.9%	23.1%	60.0%	0.9%	25.6%
Somewhat	16.7%	21.9%	22.0%	3.6%	16.6%
Not Very	40.7%	43.8%	11.0%	95.5%	45.1%
No Answer	17.7%	11.3%	7.0%	0.0%	12.6%
TOTAL	430	160	100	110	800

As to the demographic characteristics of the Indochinese population in the U.S., one found that such population is relatively young, the mean age of the whole group is 37.5 years of age. For each group, the Hmong is the youngest with a mean age of 36, Lao 37, Vietnamese 38 and Cambodian 39. When asked what is their occupation. The Vietnamese seem to have more skills than other groups and cover a wider range of occupations. The occupation of the Cambodians, Lao, and Hmong is limited to seven cluster categories of occupations such as clerical, crafts operative, transportation, laborer, and service work with low pay (see table 8).

Table : 8 CURRENT OCCUPATION OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD BY ETHNICITY

	VIET	LAO	HMONG	CAMB	OVERALL
Self Employed	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
Professional	21.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12.9%
Managerial	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%
Merchant	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%
Sales	2.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%
Clerical	6.5%	1.8%	9.5%	4.8%	5.9%
Crafts	21.2%	21.4%	19.0%	9.5%	20.1%
Operatives	22.3%	51.8%	23.8%	52.4%	30.0%
Transportation	3.3%	1.8%	0.0%	4.8%	2.6%
Laborer	4.3%	7.1%	2.4%	0.0%	4.3%
Public & Private Service Work	8.2%	14.3%	38.1%	28.6%	14.9%
Service Work	7.1%	1.8%	7.1%	0.0%	5.6%
Other	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
Total Applicable	185	56	42	21	304
Inapplicable (Unemployed)	245	104	58	89	496
TOTAL	430	160	100	110	800

A recent study of Robert Bach on Employment Characteristics of Indochinese refugees (Jan-1979) suggests that the Indochinese tended to be employed at rates similar to those for the total U.S population. Of the refugees over the age of 16, more than half (53%) reported they were employed. The figure for the general population was 59%. The differential between employment rates of males and females was less among the refugees than among the general population. The rate of employment of males is 62% and 42% of females, a difference of 20%. For the general population, less females were employed with a difference of 25%. Forty five percent of the refugees reported holding blue collar jobs, as compared to 33% of general population. Almost twice as many refugees were employed in laborer positions as were members of the general population. Approximately 12% of the refugees reporting they worked in private household position which typically offer low salaries, without benefits, and without security. Only 1% of the general population reported employment in household position. Bach's survey data also indicates that refugees youth had more difficulty obtaining employment than their general population counterpart. While 57% of general population between age 16 and 24 reported employed, only 37% refugees youth did. The refugee youth figure closely paralled the figure for Black and other minority youth. (Bach, refugee Report:1979).

The Indochinese people tend to live close to each other because of need from each other. They still eat their own food, they go to their own restaurants, drug stores, tailors', jewelry, auto mechanics' , dentists', doctors', even movies theater, where people can speak their own languages, can share their feelings and experiences. The Vietnamese stores, the doctors offices, the Indochinese social services are the centers of information. Most Vietnamese read their own books, their own newspapers written in their own language. There are now over 100 newspapers and magazines written in Vietnamese language in the U.S. The news that attract most attention to the readers

are the ones relating to the political and social events in their native county. They could not forget their relatives who are still back there. All of them no matter how poor they are, try to save money in order to buy fabrics and everything needed to send home for their relatives at the average amount of 30 to 100 dollars a month. The survival in the new country is one of their preoccupations, their relatives' survival in their native countries is another concern. Those relatives are father, mother, husband, wife, children, brothers and sisters who are always parts of their family.

THE INTERVIEW

Given the fact that the problems have their roots and initiated in the community, the solutions should be sought among the community. The researcher sought to interview community leaders, the members of the advisory council, and the participants of FILAMEDA parent traning program. With respect to the assumptions previously stated, the researcher focused on the following issues:

1/ Willingness of community leaders to learn the American educational system, and the democratic process of making decision,
2/ their attitude toward education,
3/ their perception about their children's achievement and progress at school,
4/ their awareness about their children's linguistic and cultural problems,
5/ their alienation in school community contact and communication,
6/ their concern about their new life, future, and survival of their children,
7/ the degree of association with members of own group and with members of other ethnic and linguistic groups
8/ willingness to be involved in planning a training program,
9/ their awareness of the concept of equity and minority language children,

10/ their perception of their role, responsibility, and rights of parents within the system of American education.

The interviews were conducted using instructured and open ended questions. The respondents feel free to say and give their opinions. The interviews and the collection of data were limited to community leaders and parents who spoke English since the researcher was not proficient in the languages of other Indochinese groups (Lao, Camdodian and Hmong).

THE FINDING

All respondents acknowledged that they do not know much about the American educational system as most of them are new to this country.

1/ Traditionally, parents do not see the "necessity" to be involved in school decisions. If they are "invited" to attend a conference or a meeting with school personnel, they will attend from an "obligation", but not because they are willing to be active participants.

2/ Parents do not think they have the "responsibility" to be involved in school activities. In their own countries, and most countries in the Western and Eastern worlds as well - parents never expect to have the responsibility in shaping school policy, instruction, or curriculum development of the school.

3/ Parents do not see that they have any "roles" in the participation in school activities. The assumption is that the division of labor in society has been clearly assigned to each public service. Every worker in public service has his or her own defined role to perform. The police department does not need the community to participate in the process of decision making. Each member of the community has his/her own role to

perform. School administrators, teachers, school boards also have their roles in deciding what children should learn and what they should not learn at schools. Decisions made by school personnel might be erroneous in the same way as the decisions made by parents at home. Schools are not to be blamed for their fallacy, if any, in assigning instructional programs which may not be appropriate the children's needs.

4/ Parents do not see how inequity can function in the public system of education. Most refugees have come from poorer countries where shortage of facilities far exceed the American schools and the better facilities in the American schools create an impression in the parents' mind that these school are far better than the poorly equipped schools in their native countries. Well equipped schools will eventually provide better education in an absolute sense. Few parents can see that American schools are not equally equipped and staffed, and that children are not treated equally according to their cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds.

5/ Parents do not see the painful assimilication experience their children have to undergo when they have to struggle to overcome the language barrier. Few parents can see the existence of another form of inequity as their child is labelled as linguistically disadvantaged and is not given proper and adequate programs. Further more, few teachers can see how far a program is proper and adequate, not to speak of parents who have only a few years of formal education or no formal education at all.

6/ Most parents do not know that they have their "right" to participate in the process of decision making for their own children education. No parents have any ideas about the court case such as Lau vs Nichols, or the federal statutes such as Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) which gives financial assistance to local educational agencies for the development of bilingual curricula, programs to familiarize students

with their culture, and plans for closer cooperation between school and home. The Title VII was designed to meet the needs of the ethnic and socio-economic, and linguistic background of student. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits discrimination in federally assisted programs and activiites. They do not know of the AB507 of the California legislature which requires that whenever a school of any school district has 10 or more pupils of limited English proficiency in the same grade level, the district must offer one of the defined program, and that in cases where a school does not have 10 pupils of limited English proficiency in the same grade level, but has at least 20 such pupils in the school, one certificated bilingual cross-cultural teacher and an instruction program must be provided of federal and categorical aid funds are received by the school.

7/ Most parents are "not able to communicate." Communication does not simply means the use of and the ability to comprehend and convey ideas in English. Even though interpretation into the parents' language has been provided, most parents do not seem to understand "what is really going on" with the learning of their children. It is not only parents who are not able to understand, but also school and school districts have not been able to provide adequate information so that parents can understand "what is really going on" at school, what is good for the success of their children.

8/ What do parents do at the council meetings? When asked what they expect to do as members of the advisory council, most of them said they attend the meeting to hear school district officials reporting about the bilingual program, most of them said they have a vague idea about the program, over 75% said they wanted to know better about the program (Thong le, 1978). This concluded that the advisory council could not give any advices because they have not been prepared for the position of making decision. The council have been relying passively

on the reports of the school administrator and will continue to do so as far as they are not able to have a clear picture of the problems their children are faced with.

9/ Some community leaders and members of the advisory council expressed a willingness to attend parent training programs. They also expressed the desire to be members of the planning committee for such program. Some suggested that training sessions should be organized separately for each ethnic group. The Lao community do not feel at ease in attending meetings with other groups and they feel more reluctant or scared to hear a language that is in comprehensible to them.

10/ Transportation is also a problem. While a family of the general U.S. population has an average of two cars, less than half of the Hmong families can afford to have a car. Within the Indochinese community, most Vietnamese doctors provide transportation for their clients as well as the Indochinese food stores.

11/ In San Diego county the Indochinese tend to live close together, in particular areas. School meeting for each separate groups should be held close to the center of their community. The Cambodians are concentrated in the East San Diego and North Park areas, the Lao are concentrated along the Market street area the Hmong in the Linda Vista area, while the Vietnamese scatter almost every part of San Diego, particularly in East San Diego, North Park, Linda Vista, Clairemont, and El Cajon city.

12/ The Vietnamese are likely to be the least conformist among the Indochinese people, while the Hmong seem to be the most. The Hmong community leader has more authority over his people. At the Educational Conference for Indochinese Parents on June 19, 1982 in the Linda Vista area, the Hmong participants far outnumbered the Lao and the Cambodians partly because the conference site was

close to their homes, partly because of their conformity to the advices of their leaders.

13/ Most Indochinese parents value education for their children very highly. However, they could not do much to help their children at home and at school, first because of their inability to master the subject, second, because they are preoccupied most with their work and their own learning. Most of them believe the children have few problems at school and will have a brighter future than their parents in the U.S.

CONCLUSION

The American parents have been living in this democratic society, and the process of participation in decision making has become a way of life. The American parents are active in showing their knowledge, exercising their power, influencing policy and decision makers. The American parents do not hesitate to voice their opinions, even though these opinions hurt school officials. As a tradition, school officials, politicians, decision makers respect those people who exhibit power, knowledge, and influence. Thus the children of those parents receive more respect, more attention and care from school, and eventually shape school curriculum accordingly. In contrast, the Indochinese parents do not live, do not think, do not act, and do not perceive themselves exercising influence in that way. They see themselves powerless in this strange world. Their role in the advisory council are proforma for they have been set up as to meet the laws. The members of the council do not make any decisions and see themselves as tokenism. The school district officials are more likely to defend what they are doing instead of establishing a sincere, humanistic dialogue with parents in order for them to inquire what they need to know about their children's educational needs. Any attempt on the part of district to alienate the children of their home culture and language is after all an act of

dehumanization. The principle of equal opportunity under the law is to protect the child, and not be used to protect the excutioner. It is the responsibility of the school districts to educate those parents who lack knowledge of the educational process and it is not the parents' responsibility to participate without having the knowledge and ability to do so.

REFERENCES

1. Assembly Bill 507, California Legislature, introduced by Assemblyman Chacon, Feb 8, 1979. Bill signed by Governor Brown on 9/16/80.
2. Cordasco, Franceseo et al, Teaching Ethnic Studies, Washington DC, National Council for Social Studies, 1973:235.
3. Federal Register, Title VII, Subpart B. Basic, Programs of Bilingual Education, 123.17. Parent and Community Participation.
4. Final Report on study of Characteristics and Needs of Indochinese Refugee in San Diego County, Dec. 1981, ACCESS, 6970 Linda Vista Rd, San Diego.
5. Mitzell, Hayes, Maintaining Parent Interest in Title I Parent Advisory Council. The Urban Review, Vol. II, No. 2 1979.
6. Ochoa, Aberto M, Parental Participation in Bilingual Education, in Working with the Bilingual Community, National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, 1979.
7. Ogletree, Earl and Walker,"Puerto Rican Parents and Bilingual Education", Bilingual Journal, Vol IV, No 2 Winter 1980.
8. Le Thong et al, "Survey on Parent Expectation and Participation is School Activities," a master degree project, 1978.
9. Tirado, John and Balasabramonian, Katherine, "Survey of Parents Opinions of Bilingual Education Programs in Chicago," Illinois, Chicago Board of Education 1975.
10. Topacio, Cayan, "Special Community Needs in Bilingual Education", Bilingual Journal Summer 1979.
11. Velasco, Izabel Guzman de, "A Guide for Effective Parent and Community Participation in Bilingual Bicultural Education", Bilingual Cross Cultural Education California State University, Sacramento, May 1978.